

REMARKS

Office action summary. Claims 1-27 and 40 are currently pending. Claims 1-6, 10-16, 22 and 40 are rejected as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,870,707 (“Zheng”). Claims 7, 8, 17-19 and 23-27 are rejected as obvious over Zheng view of U.S. Patent No. 5,910,864 (“Hira”). Claim 9 is rejected as obvious over Zheng in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,350,506 (“Dickinson”). Claims 20 and 21 are rejected as obvious over Zheng in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,331,495 (“Yoshida”).

These rejections are overcome by the amendments and otherwise traversed.

Claim amendments. Claim 1 is amended to require that the surface profile lack an exposed sharp edge which might contact a disk in use. Claim 9 is amended to correct an error in punctuation. New claim 41 has been added to claim a further aspect of the invention, disclosed on page 18 of the application.

Rejections over Zheng alone. The Zheng reference fails to disclose the limitation of claim 1 requiring no exposed sharp edge which might contact a disk in sue. Zheng also fails to disclose the limitation of claim 40 requiring a rounded corner.

The figures of Zheng show that Zheng contemplated only straight sharp edges. The Examiner has identified a single passage in Zheng, col. 4, lines 54-55, as supporting the view that the rounded corner requirement of claim 40 is found in Zheng. (Office Action at 2.) That passage, however, states in its entirety: “Leading taper 238 can be linear or curved, for example.” If one examines FIG. 2 of Zheng where leading taper 238 is shown, one will see that just making it curved will generally not produce rounded edges nor eliminate sharp ones. To eliminate sharp edges one would have to do much more than just make taper 238 curved: one would also have to give taper 238 a convex profile which meets other surfaces of the slider relatively smoothly without edge, a type of profile not suggested or taught by Zheng.

For these reasons, Zheng does not anticipate or make obvious claims 1 and 40, or the claims dependent on them, as presently amended.

Rejections over Zheng and other references. The failure to teach rounded and non-sharp edges in Zheng imply that the rejections over Zheng and other references also fail.

Furthermore, the Examiner attempts to justify the combination with Hira to reject claims 7 and 8 by citing column 13 of Hira, which supposedly teaches that one would choose a thickness in the claimed range “in order to eliminate a residual redeposition layer.” However,

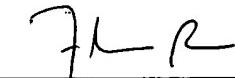
Hira's teaching merely excludes thicknesses above 35 µm for this ground, thus not providing any motivation to use the specific thicknesses claimed here. The Examiner's finding of motivation to combine with Hira is thus deficient.

Similarly, the Examiner's finding of motivation to combine with Hira's teachings of ceramics, used to invalidate claims 27-29, is based on a short passage of Hira (col. 9, lines 51-55): "In the above processing technique, a material to be processed (e.g. a ceramic substrate) gives a small dimensional shift, making it possible to form magnetic head rail(s) of high dimensional accuracy." While the Examiner states that this passage teaches that ceramics would provide a small dimensional shift, the passage seems to be saying that "the above processing technique" is what "gives a small dimensional shift." The fact that "a ceramic substrate" is preceded by "e.g." would imply that it is merely one of a number of materials that can be used, and not a material picked out to produce a small dimensional shift.

New claim 41. New claim 41 is believed to be patentable over the prior art of record on account of the patentability of claim 1 and also because the use of the particular equations set forth in new claim 41 is not disclosed or suggested there.

Conclusion. If the Examiner has any questions concerning this response, he is welcome to contact the undersigned attorney at (650) 251-7712.

Respectfully submitted,



Flavio M. Rose, Reg. No. 40,791
c/o MINTZ LEVIN
1400 Page Mill Road
Palo Alto, CA 94304
Phone (650) 251-7700
Fax (650) 251-7739
Customer No. 23980

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